

J. Ross et al. to Andrew Jackson, January 23, 1835, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

JOHN ROSS AND OTHERS TO JACKSON.¹

¹ This letter bears the signatures of John Ross, R. Taylor, Daniel McCoy, Samuel Gunter, and William Rogers.

Washington, Brown's Hotel, January 23, 1835.

Honored Sir, After having duly exhibited before the Hon. Secretary of War their Credentials, The Undersigned Delegation of the Cherokee Nation east of the Mississippi had the honor of addressing to you, thro' the War Department a Communication dated the 14th inst. and Covering a Copy of an Act passed by the Legislature of Georgia during its last session, in reference to their people. Having not, as yet, received any reply to that Communication, and being pressed by the Unexampled sufferings of their unfortunate Nation, they would respectfully take the liberty to make this address to your Excellency personally.

It is Known to your Excellency, that the history of the Cherokee Nation since the year 1829, up to the present, has been On its part, One of repeated, Continued unavailing struggle against the Cruel policy of Georgia; On the part of that State, it has been One, of unparalleled aggravated Acts of Oppression upon the Nation. Actuated by an unextinguishable love of Country, Confiding implicitly in the good faith of the American Govt. and believing that the Govt. priding itself, as it does, upon its justice and humanity would, not only not disregard its own plighted faith, but would eventually interpose to prevent it from being disregarded, and trampled into dust by the State of Georgia, Being

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fully convinced in their Own judgement that they could not prosper as well any where else as upon their Native land, The Cherokees have successively appealed to the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary Departments of this Govt. for redress of Wrongs Committed and security against injuries apprehended, but as yet those appeals have been unavailing; In defiance of Acts of Congress, decisions of the Supreme Court, And of solemn treaties, Georgia has gone on first, to despoil them of their laws and Govt. and impose upon them laws the most obnoxious, then to distribute their lands unbought, to her Own Citizens by lottery, and lastly she has put forth her hand under the last Act of her Legislature to expel them from their homes and firesides, to drive them out to hunger and perish in the Wild forests, to Accomplish this last Cruel purpose, Armed bands of her Citizens are now parading thro' their Country. The Undersigned deeply affected with this deploreable Condition of their people would ask you, Dear Sir, to pity and save them. For upon the exercise of your power alone, they are firmly persuaded the salvation of their people depend. Let the Comforts And enjoyments of life which have been so profusely scattered around you, by a bountiful providence remind you, that hundreds of their people, many of whom are women and children, may now be homeless wanderers, suffering with cold and hunger, for no crime, but, because they did not love their Country less.

The Crisis of the fate of the Cherokee people, seems to be rapidly approaching, And the time has come, when they must be relieved of their sufferings. They having fully determined against a removal to Arkansas. The Undersigned Delegation would therefore most respectfully and earnestly ask to be informed, Upon what terms will the President negotiate for a final termination of those sufferings, that their people may repose in peace and comfort on the land of their nativity, under the enjoyment of such rights and privileges as belongs to freemen. And the Delegation would in Conclusion beg leave to Assure the President in great sincerity, that after a due deliberation On the terms which he may offer, should they be found to have been dictated in that spirit of liberality and justice, As in their best judgement would afford their people ample relief and satisfaction by adopting them; it may be done. With Sentiments of great respect, they remain,

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Yr Excellency's Most Obt. Hble. Servts.